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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HCR 37/ HR 39 - URGING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REDUCE THE USE OF STANDARDIZED
TESTING IN HAWAII'S PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

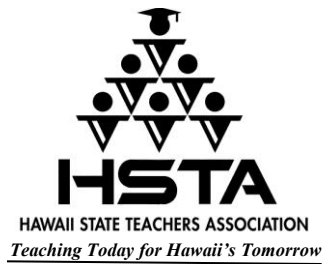
Chair Woodson, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association strongly **supports HCR 37/ HR 39**, urging the Board of Education and the Department of Education to reduce the use of standardized testing in Hawaii's public education system.

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports SCR 157/SR 119**, requesting the Department of Education to reduce the use of standardized testing in the public education system.

Since the enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Race to the Top program in 2009, Hawai'i was obliged to shift its focus in public education from teaching to testing. Undue emphasis on testing leads to a situation in which teachers spend more time preparing students to take tests and less time educating, while students spend more time taking tests and less time learning. Even though these stricter mandates have been replaced, the top driven over-emphasis on testing outcomes has not.

According to a 2014 study conducted by the National Education Association, 72 percent of teachers feel considerable pressure to improve test scores. Over half of teachers surveyed reported spending too much time on testing and test preparation, with the average teacher spending approximately 30 percent of their time on tasks related to standardized tests. At the same time, a 2014 PDK/Gallup poll on public attitudes toward public schools found that only 31 percent of parents support using standardized test scores to evaluate teachers, despite the implementation of numerous reforms increasing the use of test scores in assessing the performance of schools and educators. Exorbitant and expensive testing systems—the Smarter



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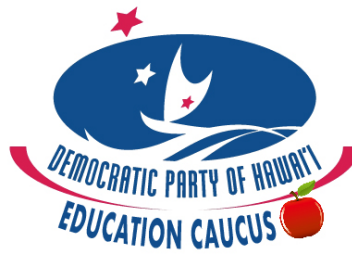
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Balanced Assessment and the PARCC Assessment—exacerbate the misuse and overuse of standardized testing. When states were free to develop their own tests, they were freed from the constraints of “test-driven curricula,” in which time spent taking and preparing for tests is imbricated within an educational plan that replaces creativity and critical thinking with test-taking skills and rote content.

Yet, this no longer needs be the case. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act, passed in December of 2015, now provides states with increased flexibility in the use of standardized testing, including eliminating federally mandated inclusion of standardized tests in teacher evaluations, and allowing states to choose what test to use for annual school assessments. ESSA also permits states to limit the amount of time that students spend preparing for and taking standardized tests, and provides funding to states for auditing and streamlining assessment systems. We have the opportunity to make bold changes to our “test and punish” education culture. We must seize it.

Because over reliance on standardized testing undermines genuine learning, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this resolution.



HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 37/HOUSE RESOLUTION 39, URGING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REDUCE THE USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTING IN HAWAII'S PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

MARCH 18, 2019 · HOUSE LOWER AND HIGHER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN H.
WOODSON

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports HCR 37/HR 39, which urges the Board of Education and Department of Education to reduce the use of standardized testing in Hawai'i's public education system.

The overuse of standardized tests in Hawai'i's schools has become an epidemic. Rather than focus on student learning, our schools devote increasing amounts of time to “test and punish” frameworks, in which critical thinking and applied knowledge are replaced with rote test-taking skills that adversely impact a teacher's or schools' statistical assessment. According to the American Federation of Teachers report “Testing More, Teaching Less: What America's Obsession with Student Testing Costs in Money and Lost Instructional Time,” test preparation and testing in heavily tested districts can absorb up to a month and a half of school time. The grade-by-grade analysis found that students spend from 60 to more than 110 hours per year on test preparation, at an estimated cost per pupil of \$700 to \$1,000 in heavily tested grades. In Hawai'i, the DOE's external contracts for the furnishing and facilitation of standardized

testing and test-driven curricula and professional development total approximately \$60 million, a number that does not include the cost of computer resources or school personnel needed to administer each test or the price of screener and preparation exams. At the same time, abandoning so-called “toxic testing” could add 20 to 40 minutes of daily instructional time to secondary school grades, according to the AFT report, with hundreds of dollars per student—and millions of dollars overall—reallocated to the purchase of instructional programs, school technology, infrastructure upgrades, and teacher pay increases.

Make no mistake, when we discuss standardized tests, we're talking about the Common Cor(porat)e State Standards Initiative, a set of corporatized standards that were foisted upon teachers and children across the nation without prior field testing. Developed by an organization called Achieve and the National Governors Association, and funded by the Gates Foundation, the standards were crafted with minimal public input. Under the Obama Administration's Race to the Top grant program, states were effectively told that if they did not adopt the Common Core, they would not be eligible to receive a portion of the program's \$4.35 billion in grant money. As education policy expert Diane Ravitch has said, “Federal law prohibits the U.S. Department of Education from prescribing curriculum, but in this case the Department figured out a clever way to avoid the letter of the law.” The result? A precipitous decline in test scores based on Common Core's arbitrary cut scores, a lack of critical thinking development based on Common Core's arbitrary pedagogical instructional time ratios, disproportionate harm caused to English Language Learners and low-income students, further elimination of arts education, and parents and students across the nation joining the United Opt Out movement against the Smarter Balanced Assessment associated with Common Core, with students—including those in Hawai’i—literally “opting out” of toxic high-stakes tests. Both President Obama and the U.S. Department of Education have called for an end to overtesting, with Obama calling for testing time to be capped at no more than 2 percent of student instructional time. Even the Gates Foundation, the alchemists responsible for the Common Core monstrosity, have backpedaled on their Frankensteinian experiment, calling for a moratorium on linking Common Core to teacher evaluations and their related “value-added method” of measuring performance.

Now, we have hope. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act, passed in December of 2015 and set for robust implementation in December of 2016, provides states with increased flexibility in the use of standardized testing, including eliminating federally mandated inclusion of standardized tests in teacher evaluations, and allowing states to choose what test to use for annual school assessments. ESSA also permits states to limit the amount of time that students spend preparing for and taking standardized tests, provides funding to states for auditing and streamlining assessment systems, and, importantly, establishes an “innovative assessment pilot program” through which states may receive permission to employ authentic assessments that connect classroom learning with real-world problem-solving (project-based and problem-based learning are two examples of authentic assessment methodologies). In fact, the Hawai’i State Department of Education has repeatedly declared its intent to apply to be one of seven states participating in the pilot program, which departmental officials note will happen this year, and has indicated that schools implementing authentic assessments will, in the future, not have to “double test”, meaning that they will be exempt from the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Toxic testing undermines our schools’ curricula, our teachers’ autonomy, and our students critical thinking skills. We can abolish the “test and punish” education culture that *still* enslaves our teachers and students. We must move quickly to set them free.

HR-39

Submitted on: 3/15/2019 8:13:27 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support HCR 37! I began teaching in 1974 and retired in 2014. The influence of standardized testing on the every day lives of children has not been positive. "Back in the day" when standardized testing occurred once a year in a few grades, they were not the intrusive, all-day, every day focus of our classrooms. Why the change? Who benefitted from this obsessive movement of testing? Corporations like Pearson and politicians who used the "need for data" is the answer. Certainly not the students.

How much has been needlessly spent on the implementation and continuation of tests like the SBAC? How much is spent on the "coaches", technology, administrative staff, WONDERS and other basic resources which have been touted as a "need" rather than what they truly are..circumvention of strong, place-based education for all students. How much longer will we allow inequitable treatment of our students based on outside parameters of what is success? How much longer will we allow those parameters to put students on the Leeward side of O`ahu and other places to have their students miss out on what students in other places like Millilani readily receive based on these standardized tests? ie consistent science curriculum

We had a standardized test called HSA. While not perfect, it worked well and people should have continued to refine it. The students didn't have to spend time working through "Iowa-related" experiences to answer questions about concepts. They could just answer the questions. Then we bring in a totally continent-based, unrelated test and resources.

I could continue on this testimony for much longer. I will end this with PLEASE pass this HCR37 with the recommendation that the legislature follow up with the BOE. Follow up that the BOE does something about the excessive test prep. and inappropriate testing. NO DATA is worth the amount of damage that this does to children.

C. Burghardt

HR-39

Submitted on: 3/15/2019 11:29:28 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kuuleianuhea Awo-Chun	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Esteemed Hawai'i State Legislators:

Educators can often lose hope that our dreams of changing the world one student at a time will ever break through the nightmare that the education system can be. For me, this is compounded further by the fact that I am a teacher and administrator at a Hawaiian-focused charter school, which comes with its own challenges in this system. Every day we forge on, motivated by the wins that let us know we are making an impact. It is those moments that allow educators to endure another day, quarter, semester, and year. Today, I add HR 39 to this list of wins that sustain me for another day. I wholeheartedly support HR 39 and urge you to consider replacing standardized testing in Hawai'i with authentic assessments that promote critical thinking and align classroom instruction with real-world problem-solving.

No good educator is against rigor, accountability, or assessment. Nor are all educators against standardized testing completely. The crux of the issue is in the amount of time, energy, and resources we expend in preparation for an enormous volume of standardized testing with little evidence of impact on how it better prepares students for their futures. In my own school, at least 25% of the school year is given to preparation for a variety of high stakes tests, both required and self-imposed. Between lesson plans that are designed to promote very specific types of thinking, to practice tests, interim assessments, test prep games, online programs, and more - the reason for our existence as a Hawaiian-focused charter school (HFCS) is deprioritized in order to get our students ready for testing. Why? Because the fate of our charter contract depends on us proving that our students are learning but School Specific Measures (SSM) only comprise a small portion of these accountability measures.

Despite the fact that from year to year, almost 100% of our families identify place- and culture-based learning as the top reason why they choose us for their child, we allocate a quarter of our valuable time into testing. Despite the fact that over 80% of our alumni say that the Hawaiian culture, values, and project-based education they received with us was a key factor in their success after graduation, we continue to support our kids in "filling in the bubbles." And when they are done filling in the bubbles, we get to the real work of preparing change agents who make impacts in the community and world outside our classroom trailers.

Our students have helped to restore acres of lo'i on almost every island in this chain and calloused their hands to pass rocks down miles of fishpond walls, learning about how each of those systems function effectively and helping to bring back food sovereignty for all of us here in Hawai'i. That is science, math, and engineering. They have testified in writing and in person at neighborhood board meetings, the Hawai'i State legislature, and the United Nations to educate even the most skeptical adults on major global issues facing us all. That is Social Studies and ELA. They have sailed hundreds of nautical miles spreading the values of sustainability and aloha – values the world needs NOW. That is every General Learner Outcome and the intergration of every content area to boot. And they have done all these things while also working in a classroom setting on their reading, writing, math, science, and all the other "normal" coursework you would find in a school. What is the value of their unique learning opportunities? Where, at the state-level, are we tracking these real-life, authentic measures of success? And how are their teachers recognized for their facilitation of these teaching best practices?

Globally, there is evidence that shows education trending away from high volumes of standardized assessment. Even nationally, states are already moving toward performance-based assessments as a systemic way to measure student success. HFCS principals and leaders from the Hawai'i State Charter School Commission recently attended meetings with the California Performance Assessment Consortium (CPAC). HFCS principals presented on the unique, mission-driven, culturally-relevant ways we assess and how it benefits all students. From that presentation, the seed has been planted to launch a performance-based assessment consortium for the needs of all schools in Hawai'i. HR 39 further lays the foundation for this collaboration to be fostered, and for Hawai'i to lead education reform in a powerful and impactful way.

In closing, the world is a vastly different place than it was when I was a student. Hawai'i cannot ignore the need to prepare our children for a future that is so uncertain. HR 39 is a step toward designing a system that actually makes sense, one that measures both academic competency and a student's ability to succeed in a fast-paced and ever-changing world. Thank you for considering and supporting this important resolution.

Sincerely,

Ku'uleianuhe Awo-Chun

Vice-Principal of Curriculum and Instruction

HÄ• lau KÄ« MÄ• na NCPCS